

# Research by Nerenz & Knop

*How do differences in group size affect*

- the overall amount of speech
- the amount of student talk and teacher talk
- the language used?

Nerenz, A and Knop, G. "The Effect of Group Size on Students' Opportunity to Learn in the Second Language Classroom," ESL and the Foreign Language Teacher. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1982.

# In terms of group sizes . . .

- individualized
- large group instruction
- small group instruction
- pair work instruction



# Results Recap

## ***Individualized study time***

students spoke about 2/3 as often as teachers (.61)

## ***Large group instruction***

students spoke nearly as often as teachers (.85)

## ***Small group instruction***

students spoke almost 4 times as often as teachers (3.78)

## ***Pair instruction***

students spoke more than 8 times as often as teachers (8.44)



# For best results with pair activities . . .

1. Choose activities that have a real-life context and produce the desired speaking target.
2. Make sure the activity has an “information gap.”
3. Pair students of uneven language ability.
4. Motivate the activity—introduce it in an exciting way that will make students want to do it and do it well!
5. Make sure students understand *exactly* what they are do to. Model how the activity is done. Verify student understanding of how the activity will be carried out *before* beginning the activity.
6. Set a time limit, and use a timer to monitor it.



# For best results with pair activities . . .

7. Choose time limits *not* in 5-minute increments (ex. 7 minutes).
8. When choosing your time limit, underestimate (slightly) the time you think will be needed. Over several activities, students will see that they must stay on-task to get the activity done.
9. Circulate among the students throughout the activity. Keep track of how students are doing.
10. Choose 1-2 language feedback tips that can be worked on in the immediate future.

inspired and adapted from *Languages and Children-Making the Match*, Curtain and Dahlberg (2010)